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**Montana
Office of Public Instruction**
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Dear Parent or Guardian:

This year in January and February, the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) will be administering a statewide pilot test to determine ways to improve the MontCAS CRT for 7th and 8th grades in reading and mathematics. The research is funded by the United States Department of Education through a General Supervision Enhancement Grant (GSEG) to the State of Montana. The pilot test is the final activity of the three year project. Based on the results, the OPI will decide if it is feasible to include this approach in the MontCAS assessment program.

Your son or daughter has been selected to participate in one of the pilot tests (the CRT-M), based on his/her prior performance on the CRT and endorsement by your child's school. This letter provides information about the pilot test.

The CRT-M is an interactive, computer-based assessment, which provides students with a hint where needed, to answer questions. All questions are multiple choice. Each student will take one test, using a computer and headphones. Students will be asked to complete a short online survey about their experience after taking the test. There are:

- 50 items in each test of Mathematics at grades 7 and 8.
- 6 reading passages with 42 items in the grade 7 Reading test.
- 3 test sessions for each test containing 10-17 items per session. Students will be able to take breaks between sessions.
- practice sessions prior to each test, so students can see how the test works.

This activity will be conducted professionally with strict adherence to ethical and legal requirements. All data will be aggregated and reported in such a way that no participating community, system, school, student, or teacher can be identified. There are no foreseeable risks to your child or to you associated with this project. On the contrary, we hope that this research leads to improvements on the MontCAS CRT which will benefit all students. The CRT-M pilot test will not be used for accountability purposes. Students taking the CRT-M will take the CRT, as usual.

The participation of your child is voluntary. If you do not wish for your child to be involved, please inform your school's principal by November 18, 2009.

If you have any questions about the pilot test, please contact

Judy Snow, State Assessment Director, jsnow@mt.gov (406-444-3656) or
Dr. Sue Bechard, Project Director, at bechard.sue@measuredprogress.org
(603-767-6898).

The Montana Office of Public Instruction looks forward to your child's participation in this important activity, as this project is critical to providing accurate assessments with usable results for schools, teachers, and parents.

Thank you for your interest and support.

The Montana Office of Public Instruction provides vision, advocacy, support, and leadership for schools and communities to ensure that all students meet today's challenges and tomorrow's opportunities.